



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Two Men Plead Guilty to Federal Drug Charge For Setting Up Clandestine Drug Lab at Georgetown University - Discovery of Lab Led to Evacuation of Hundreds of Dormitory Residents -**

WASHINGTON - John Perrone, 19, and Charles B. Smith, 18, both of Andover, Mass., pled guilty today in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to a felony narcotics charge stemming from their creation of a clandestine drug laboratory last fall inside a dormitory room at Georgetown University.

The guilty pleas were announced by U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr., Ava A. Cooper-Davis, Special Agent in Charge of the Washington Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration, and Cathy L. Lanier, Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department.

The defendants pled guilty to attempted unlawful manufacture of a controlled substance, a District of Columbia offense. The Honorable Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly, who presided at today's hearing, scheduled sentencing for March 18, 2011.

Under voluntary District of Columbia sentencing guidelines, the charge carries a likely range of six to 18 months in prison, with probation permissible. Under the plea agreement, the parties will jointly recommend a term of six months, with the time suspended. The parties also will recommend the defendants be placed on three years of probation and required to perform 200 hours of community service, including at least 30 hours in the District of Columbia.

According to a factual proffer submitted to the Court, the Georgetown University police department discovered the laboratory in the early morning hours of Saturday, October, 23, 2010, inside Smith's dormitory room at Harbin Hall, on the Georgetown campus. The lab was being used to manufacture dimethyltryptamine, or DMT, a hallucinogenic drug. Smith was in the room with Perrone, who was his guest while visiting for the weekend.

The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) were notified. A DEA expert in clandestine labs was summoned to the scene. Because of

the possible risk of explosion associated with most clandestine labs - and specifically the flammable nature of some of the chemicals found in the room, along with other unknown substances - authorities decided to evacuate the entire dormitory, hundreds of students.

No one was injured during the incident. Subsequent investigation determined that the process used to manufacture DMT does not typically carry the same inherent risk of explosion as the danger in more commonly found laboratories that are used to make substances such as phencyclidine and methamphetamine. The chemicals seized from the dorm room, meanwhile, were analyzed by a DEA chemist who found trace amounts of DMT. The total net weight of DMT recovered was about one gram, an amount that is not inconsistent with personal use.

“These defendants have gone from college freshmen to convicted felons in the space of four months,” said U.S. Attorney Machen. “This case, like so many others that we prosecute every day, demonstrates how much young people are putting at risk when they engage in self-destructive behavior involving illegal drugs.”

“The clandestine manufacture of controlled substances poses a significant risk to our communities,” said Special Agent in Charge Cooper-Davis. “Today’s guilty pleas represent law enforcement’s commitment to protect our youth from exposure to dangerous labs and the toxic substances they produce.”

“Illegal drugs in our city cannot and will not be tolerated,” said MPD Chief Lanier. “I want to thank the authorities at Georgetown University for assisting us in bringing this case to a quick conclusion.”

In announcing the guilty pleas, U.S. Attorney Machen, Special Agent in Charge Davis, and MPD Chief Lanier praised those who worked on the case from the DEA, MPD, and Georgetown University Campus Police. They also praised the work of Assistant U.S. Attorney B. Patrick Costello Jr., who investigated and prosecuted the case.

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